



Phone: 412-386-4000
Facsimile: 412-386-4051

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health (NIOSH)
National Personal Protective
Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)
626 Cochrans Mill Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15236
November 5, 2002

RESPIRATOR USERS NOTICE

(Revised November 20, 2002 for clarification)

**Subject: Potential Deterioration of Exhalation Breathing Hose on Ocenco,
Incorporated EBA 6.5 Self-Contained, Self-Rescuer (SCSR) Manufactured
or Refurbished in the Calendar Year 1992**

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH or the Institute) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) wish to inform users of the Ocenco, Incorporated, (Ocenco) EBA 6.5 Self-Contained-Breathing-Apparatus (SCBA) that the potential for exhalation breathing hose deterioration may exist on Ocenco EBA 6.5 SCSRs manufactured or refurbished in the calendar year 1992. The Ocenco EBA 6.5 SCSRs may be further identified by the NIOSH/MSHA approval number TC-13F-104.

During Phase 8 of the ongoing NIOSH/MSHA Long Term Field Evaluations, one Ocenco EBA 6.5 unit was found to have a deteriorated exhalation breathing hose. The unit in question was manufactured in 1992 (SN: 92100060) and exhibited several small tears in the exhalation breathing hose. These small tears were located midway on the hose and also near the connection to the chemical bed. As a result, there was partial loss of exhalation gas during metabolic simulator testing at NIOSH, causing the oxygen supply to be used up in fifty-six (56) minutes. Subsequently, the Institute and MSHA opened a Certified Product Investigation. Ocenco concurrently conducted an investigation and found additional units manufactured in calendar year 1992, to also have deteriorated exhalation breathing hoses. The root cause of these deteriorated hoses has not been identified, but the problem is believed to be isolated to six hose production lots received by Ocenco in 1992. Since neither the extent of hose deterioration nor its impact upon the performance of the SCSR can be predicted, Ocenco EBA 6.5 devices manufactured or refurbished in 1992 may no longer be in approved condition.

The potential for exhalation breathing hose deterioration may exist for EBA 6.5 SCSRs **manufactured or refurbished** in the calendar year 1992. As a condition of NIOSH/MSHA approval, the Ocenco EBA 6.5 SCSR is required to be inspected and refurbished by Ocenco at specified intervals. Due to the potential risks to the user, both NIOSH and MSHA strongly recommend that mine operators and other employers conduct an inventory of Ocenco EBA 6.5 SCSRs in their possession to identify those units that were manufactured or refurbished in calendar year 1992. Units found to have a manufacturing date of 1992, except those that have already been subjected to mandatory factory service after 1992, are of concern and should be

Page 2 - **Potential Deterioration of Exhalation Breathing Hose on Ocenco, Incorporated
EBA 6.5 Self-Contained, Self-Rescuer (SCSR) Manufactured or Refurbished in
the Calendar Year 1992**

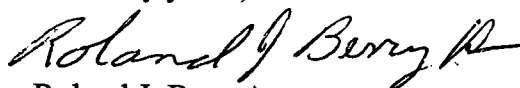
taken out of service promptly and returned to Ocenco for inspection and mandatory factory service. Any unit found to have a "Last Serviced" date of 1992 should be removed from service promptly, and returned to Ocenco for inspection and mandatory factory service unless you have records to show that this unit has been serviced by Ocenco since March 2002. The following guidance is provided in identifying affected units:

1. Units manufactured during the calendar year 1992 are easily identified with a serial number. The label located on the back and below the security band of the unit contains the following information. On the first line of the label is "Date Mfg." (Month/92), the second line is "Service Carried" and the third line is "Service Stored". Units found to have a manufacturing date of 1992, except those that have already been subjected to mandatory factory service after 1992, are of concern and should be taken out of service promptly and returned to Ocenco for inspection and mandatory factory service.
2. Units manufactured in 1987 through 1991 are not suspected to have deteriorated exhalation breathing hoses. However, any unit from this population serviced in 1992, could contain a potentially deteriorated hose. These units can be identified by looking at the label located on the back and below the security band of the unit. The label for a refurbished unit contains the following information: On the first line of the label is "Date Mfg." (Month/Year), the second line is "Last Serviced" (contains the month and year refurbished), on the third line is "Service Carried" (date the unit is to be serviced if carried) and the fourth line is "Service Stored" (date the unit is to be serviced if stored). Any unit found to have a "Last Serviced" date of 1992 should be removed from service promptly, and returned to Ocenco for inspection and mandatory factory service unless you have records to show that this unit has been serviced by Ocenco since March 2002.

Ocenco EBA 6.5 SCSRs that were manufactured in the calendar year 1993 are not likely to contain deteriorated exhalation breathing hoses. However, the Institute and MSHA recommend that those units manufactured in early 1993 (January through March) also be returned to the manufacturer for inspection and mandatory factory service promptly in order to provide additional information about the scope of this potential problem.

Additional information may be obtained from MSHA, Jeff Kravitz at 412-386-6923, or Melinda Pon at 202-693-9516, or NIOSH, Lynn Rethi at 412-386-6686.

Sincerely yours,



Roland J. BerryAnn

Acting Branch Chief

Respirator Branch

National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory